

*Program will assist veterans with job training after military service*

*Welch supports, House passes record funding for veteran care*

Washington, DC - The U.S. House passed legislation authored by Rep. Peter Welch (D-VT) to help expand employment opportunities for our nation's veterans.

Welch authored H.R. 6272 to reauthorize the Service Members Occupational Conversion and Training Act of 1992 (SMOCTA). After testifying before the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Welch worked with the committee to have his bill incorporated into [H.R. 6221](#), the Improving Veterans' Opportunity in Education and Business Act of 2008.

H.R. 6221 passed today with strong bipartisan support on the same day as record funding was approved for veteran care in a separate appropriations bill.

Welch's legislation targets those who served in past wars and may not have access to current assistance programs.

"Veterans deserve every opportunity to succeed after their service," said Welch. "One key to a veteran's success in civilian life is a good job. This new program will help match veterans with employers and provide valuable training help ensure success in their communities."

Rep. John Boozman (R-AR) said, "I thank Congressman Welch for taking the time to help revitalize the veterans training bill. His efforts will help veterans for years to come." Boozman is the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

The bill creates the Military Occupational Specialty Training (MOST) program and authorizes \$60 million each year to target veterans whose benefits under the Montgomery GI Bill have already expired.

The program reimburses employers for training service members for stable and permanent positions. It also funds assessments, developing of training plans, and providing supportive services for the veteran.

Welch added, "After our troops have sacrificed to serve our country on the battlefield, we must do all we can to serve them here at home. This legislation ensures that our commitment to veterans when they return home does not end with a welcome home ceremony."

According to a 2008 Bureau of Labor Statistics report, 18 to 54 year old veterans leaving the military after September 11 had a higher unemployment rate (6.5 percent) than did non-veterans (4.7 percent) in 2006. The unemployment rate was even higher (7.5 percent) for veterans ages 25 to 34, compared with non-veterans in the same age group (4.6 percent).

Welch also supported the largest appropriations for veterans' care in history with the passage of H.R. 6599, the FY 2009 Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations bill. The veterans funding is 11 percent more than last year and \$2.9 billion more than the President's request, building on last year's largest ever increase in the 77-year history of the Veterans' Administration.